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FEATURES, SHOWBIZ Giving birth with Obstetric Fistula; the story of Samata

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A total of thirty four cases have been booked for reconstructive surgery at the Ghana Center for Excellence for Fistula in Tamale in the northern region.

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Fistula Day celebration is the first in 2017 and will see the restoration of dignity to the women who have hoped for an end to their woes of womanhood.

Ahead of the World Fistula Day Celebration, TV3's Northern Regional Correspondent **Zubaida Ismail** spent time with thirty six year old mother of six Samata Fuseini at her residence in Gaabligbini.

Samata Fuseini is the first wife of Mba Fuseini, an industrious husband who is barely at home. She has lived with the fistula condition for seven years after her sixth birth at the Fulera Maternity Home in Tamale.

Samata opines though her four previous births have been at the hands of a traditional birth attendant, she never suffered complications until she and her husband decided to try skilled birth at the maternity center and that began her woes as a mother.

She recounts, one week after delivery, she noticed she passed stool through her female sex organ instead of her anus, this she says brought her sleepless nights as she feared of the reactions from her husband Mba Fuseini and her family members if she breaks the news.



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...many for the instant prayers as demanded by him,

Samata's fears knew no bounds as she was aware of the consequences of breaking the silence but for how long could she hide her little secret.

The moment of reckoning came, she just had to break the silence, she needed to speak to somebody but to who?

She decided to tell it first to her birth attendant who at the time had the duty of bathing her son, she found solace in her birth attendant who also advised her to speak to her husband.

She finally broke the odd news to the husband. Ironically, he received the news in good faith and rather comforted her that it is an act of God.

Her journey from the Tamale Teaching Hospital began after her husband suggested they seek medical care. Samata for months shuffled between the hospital and other facilities just to put an end to what she says has taken away her dignity.

"I experienced the condition during my fifth birth but I have six children, I was sent to the Fulera Maternity Home after a prolonged labour, I had a successful delivery and was discharged but upon reaching home,





complaints to my family and said it could be because I have just put to bed so I should hold on for a week and see if there will be changes but that never happened. I visited the hospital almost every week just seeking for treatment because I could not imagine myself ravaged in this condition, the most painful moment was when I could not join the family to pray because anytime I tried performing ablution, I felt drops of faeces and that is seen as dirt in Islam”.

Seconds passed into minutes, minutes into hours, hours into days, days into weeks and weeks into months, there came that moment of hope when the news of her condition getting corrected came from a friend.

It is clear Samata had no idea that her condition could be corrected thus her hope was far from reach.

She says she could not hid her joy, she told her husband about it but her husband suggested she held on for another child before, that is how come she had her sixth child amidst the pain and anguish.

“I had a child afterwards because my husband advised that we have our last child so I got pregnant again amidst the leakage. The child is now three years one month old and the boy whose birth brought me into

agreed to the amputation after the surgery because he has also suffered ... he cannot bear the sight of me going through those awful moment again, there have been days my husband shed tears watching me go through the pain.”

and that is what we will do, the six children are enough and all I pray is God’s protection for them”.

Samata reveals:”My husband has been very supportive, he has never said any awful words to me, my challenge is my rival who mocks me, even when it was revealed I can be treated, she didn’t like the idea of having to cook for me during that period, the news of a repair brought joy to me, I am very happy and hoping that I will go through the surgery successfully so I can go back to my normal life”.

The situation has affected her business, she recounts, “I sell sandals but sometimes unable to go out when I am in pains.”

From her home, I followed her to the fistula center where she was beginning her laboratory tests ahead of the surgery. Samata is among the thirty four women who received the news of correction after the long despair.

...many cases by pregnancies, untreated, remain untreated for their entire lives. The condition can easily reoccur in girls and women who received little or no medical checkups and then become pregnant again.

Poverty, malnutrition, poor health services, early child bearing and gender discrimination are interlinked root causes of obstetric fistula. Early marriage due to poverty as it is seen as the main social risk factor because the case is associated with early marriage and malnutrition, and reduces a woman's chances of getting timely obstetric care.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched the campaign to end fistula globally in 2003 but Ghana joined the campaign in 2005.

Following the launch of the campaign, a center for excellence for the management of obstetric fistula in the country was commissioned in Tamale on July 27, 2009 as the condition is prevalence in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions.

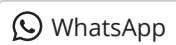
Prior to and since the launch of the campaign, about thousand women have undergone reconstructive surgery and have benefited from supportive social reintegration service, but many are those who are

...have also started getting surgery.



By Zubaida Ismail |3news.com|Ghana

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